(b) whether Government have any plan to increase the EMU service; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) The capacity of the existing train services on the Asansol-Burdwan section is considered adequate to cater to the present levels of demand.

(b) At present there is no proposal to increase EMU services on this sector.

Quality of meals in trains

†735. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quality of meals being served in trains is constantly deteriorating whereas prices thereof are increasing; and

(b) if so, the details of steps being taken by Government to check this opposite trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Menu and tariff of standard meals, breakfast, tea / coffee is fixed by the Ministry of Railways from time to time taking into account the cost of raw material prevailing in the market and other over head charges.

Railways have taken a number of policy initiatives including use of branded product, sale of reputed brand ISI marked packaged drinking water, use of standard cooking media, replacing open thali meals with casseroles, introduction of ecofriendly packaging and improved services standards etc. Surprise checks are organised from time to time at various levels and defaulters are taken up.

Touts in rail reservations

†736. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any action against the touts active in rail reservations;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether before initiating any drive against the touts, Government would initiate drive against such railway employees who are providing patronage to said touts;

(c) whether it is a fact that a large number of touts are found everywhere from parking lots to booking counters, due to patronage of rail reservation managers and employees; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) Regular checks are conducted by Commercial Department, Vigilance Department and Police against touts and other anti-social elements in reservation offices besides checks in trains to check reservation on fake names. Checks are also conducted against reservation staff and strict disciplinary action is taken against staff conniving in malpractices in reservation. Railway Protection Force has also been activated to ensure that such elements are driven away from the railway premises.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Withdrawal of German Coaches

737. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:
SHRI RAM DAS AGARWAL:
DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Northern Railway has withdrawn brand-new German Coaches of DelhiLucknow Shatabdi introduced less than a month ago, as reported in the Times of India, dated 25th June, 2001;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of losses suffered by Railways due to these coaches;

(d) whether German Coaches have been withdrawn on other routes;

(e) whether senior Officials of German firm which supplied coaches for the Lucknow Shatabdi have been pointed out defects in respect thereof;